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ABSTRACT

Continuing concern regarding the quality and future of education in both America and Japan prompts many comparisons of their nation's educational systems. Chapter 1, "Japanese Schools' Higher Achievement, Literacy, Efficiency, Discipline, Classroom Management, and Strengths of Civilization," attempts to explain the superior performance of Japanese students on international tests. Chapter 2, "Factors Shaping Current Japanese Education," explores such traditional influences on schools as Confucianism, Buddhism, nationalism, elitism, and sexism. Chapter 3, "Japanese Educational Weaknesses and American Strengths," reveals weaknesses in the Japanese system, including excessive centralization, rigid controls, neglect of the individual curricular needs of atypical students, overreaching rules, use of corporal punishment, and an excessive emphasis on achievement. Chapter 4, "The Distorting Influence of School Ranking, Entrance Examinations, and Supplementary Institutional Educational Systems on Individuals and Schools," examines the social ramifications of the obsession with entrance exam scores in Japan. Chapter 5, "Societal Attitudes Debilitating American Education and the Compelling Need for Educational Reform," contrasts dominant values that inform attitudes about schools in Japan and America. Chapter 6, "Teaching Morale, Policy Input, Remuneration, Competence, and Professional Education in Japan and the United States," reveals that Japan better promotes teacher morale. Chapter 7, "American and Japanese Curricular Differences," reviews recent changes in curriculum design and vocational programs. Chapter 8, "Conclusion," suggests the educational systems in both nations need to make critical decisions and change attitudes among educational professionals, citizens, and students. (Contains 200+ references.) (TEJ)

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